

268
PRESTCRAFT DEFENDED,

A
S E R M O N

OCCASIONED BY THE

E X P U L S I O N

O F

SIX YOUNG GENTLEMEN

FROM THE

UNIVERSITY of OXFORD,

F O R

Praying, Reading, and Expounding the Scriptures.

HUMBLY DEDICATED TO

Mr. V—C—r and the H—ds of H—s,

By their humble Servant,

The S H A V E R.

THE THIRTEENTH EDITION,

Corrected and much Enlarged.

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THE BRITISH MUSEUM

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AND ETHNOGRAPHY



AND GEOGRAPHY

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AND FISHERY

AND HUNTING

AND SPORTS

AND AMUSEMENTS

AND RECREATION

AND PASTIMES

T H E
P R E F A C E
T O T H E
C A N D I D R E A D E R.

YOU must know, my friend, that I am a gentleman in the country, and by craft a SHAVER of very considerable scope; notwithstanding I have turned preacher of late, and seem to be pretty successful at my preachment, as the sale of this sermon will testify, I have been a great man for the news, as we Shavers commonly are, and, among other papers, I usually took in the St. James's Chronicle; a paper that is filled in all the four corners; but if you ask with what, on my word, I must refer you to people of greater penetration. Well, I paid and I read to no purpose for a long while; till at last I chanced to 'spy An Extract of a Letter from Oxford, and I wot it pleased me mightily.

It told us how that, Six young men were expelled the university for holding Methodistical tenets, and for praying, reading, and expounding the scriptures in a private house. Well, thought I, that may work for

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the good of the church; but then I did not so much approve of the principal crime of those called Methodists, being said to be reading and expounding the scriptures, &c. thought I, that is going somewhat too far. Could they find nothing worse against them? Could not they have proved them drunkards? Or made it evident that they were given to wenching?—(things very common in some places)—Or could they not have convicted the young fellows of having reviled the miracles of Christ and of Moses, that their expulsion might have appeared the more eligible?

Not long after this, I happened to see another account from Oxford, wrote by the Rev. Dr. Oxoniensis; and that account made me resolve upon something. For he tells us, that one of the Six was formerly a Publican, another had been a Blacksmith, a third a Barber, and a fourth had been a Teacher in a School under W——y.

*Well, you must know, my grandfather was a publican, my uncle a blacksmith, I myself am a shaver, which is by interpretation a barber, and my eldest son, a promising lad, is designed for a schoolmaster: therefore seeing the honours of our family cast down into the puddle by the arrogance of Oxonian priests, I began to grow surly upon it; but did not yet think of preaching. What brought me to that was, finding from the learned Dr. Oxoniensis, that those young men
had*

had preached without orders. Then, thought I, I will even have a trial at it myself. Well, you must know we have a good sort of a fellow to our Parson; a gentleman who loves his bottle and his friend; if it was for a whole night together, and there is never a youth in all the parish who will sing a merrier catch, nor tell a prettier story than himself; for he is what ye may call a merry Parson. With him I am pretty familiar, and I thought I would even borrow his Sunday's stile, and his orthodox plan, knowing him to be a true churchman, and I would try what I could do at preaching. But I had certainly been disappointed in an audience, if an happy imagination had not befriended me; but no sooner had I bestirred my imagination, than I was wafted from Clarley-common to the great hall at O——d, before the V——e C——, and the Heads of Houses, to whom, after I had mounted the rostrum with the usual formality, I preached the following sermon, the whole world being supposed hearers.

Concerning which Sermon I would have it observed,

1. That I pretend not to justify any parts of the conduct of the Methodists, besides praying to God, reading, expounding the scriptures, and singing hymns, &c.

2. That I censure none of the clergy, but such as are against praying, reading, and expounding the scriptures, and singing of hymns.

3. That

3. That whoever this Coat is found to fit, I would have the gentleman put it on, and wear it as his own; assuring himself that it was made for him, and that, though a SHAVER, I am his TAYLOR.

4. That, perhaps, in gratitude for my great pains, and the new hints given in this sermon, which may cast a light upon ecclesiastical history, the V—e C——r, and Heads of Houses, may present me to some good benefice. And they may depend upon it that I shall shave the parishioners as handsomely as any of 'em.

Thus, reader, I have told you all about it; and have only to add, that after I had, at leisure hours, wrote my sermon fairly out, I carried it to a bookseller, expecting that he would be as fond of it as I was myself; which, I believe, is a case very common with us AUTHORS; but he drew up his shoulders, looked sour upon it, and said, he feared it was too coarse for this polite age. I assured him that the stile was quite clerical, being borrowed from the Parish Priest, and what he might hear in many pulpits, if he would only travel for it; but he being of the saving order, and not over fit for travelling in deep roads, agreed to take my word, rather than be at the expence and trouble of seeking further Proof; so it was sent to the Press, to furnish you, my friend, with half an hour's entertainment and please

Your humble servant,

THE SHAVER.

A
S E R M O N, &c.

Having the honor of addressing so learned a body, with bands so white, gowns so black, and caps so orthodox, I take the liberty of striking a little from the common road of preaching; and as this is a singular occasion, I shall make free with a singular text.

You know, my beloved, it is the way of most preachers to choose some passage of scripture for their text, which having distinctly read twice over, you hear no more of the bible till the sermon is finished; but are entertained with such a lecture as you may find in a news-paper, price two-pence halfpenny. But I have the honour of departing a little from this general rule, and shall be the first who takes his text from a news-paper, and illustrates his doctrine by scripture history; and having broken the ice, as we used to say, I expect to have many ingenious followers. You will find our text in the *St. James's Chronicle* for *Thursday, March 17, 1768, No. 1099, Printed by Henry Baldwin, at the Printing-Office, White - Friars, Fleet - Street.* Wherein, if you will pull your newspapers out of your pockets, you may read with me the following paragraph.

EXTRACT

EXTRACT of a LETTER from OXFORD.

On Friday last six students belonging to Edmund-Hall were expelled the University, after an hearing of several hours before Mr. Vice Chancellor, and some of the Heads of Houses, for holding Methodistical tenets, and taking upon them to pray, read, and expound the scriptures, and sing hymns in a private house. The — of the — defended their doctrines from the thirty nine articles of the established church, and spoke in the highest terms of the piety and exemplariness of their lives; but his motion was over-ruled, and sentence pronounced against them. Dr. —, one of the Heads of Houses present, observed, that as these six gentlemen were expelled for having too much religion, it would be very proper to enquire into the conduct of some who had too little; and Mr. — was heard to tell their chief accuser, that the University was much obliged to him for his good work.

OUR text is indeed somewhat long; but then, my beloved, we have the more matter to work upon; and you know this is a day in which invention is not very brisk, especially among the gentlemen clergy. But

We proceed to prosecute our subject after the old orthodox plan, namely,

- I. To go over our text by way of explication.
- II. Deduce a notable point of doctrine from it, viz. That this act of the V— C—, and the Heads of Houses, is defensible from the conduct of the clergy in all ages, and in all countries.

III. Conclude with special application.

I. Explain

I. Explain our text. In doing which I must divide into very small parcels, even as the skilful surgeon does the flesh of a hanged malefactor, when he dissects an organ. And in the first place,

Extract of a letter from Oxford.

This *Oxford*, my beloved, is a city in the West of *England*, notable for a great university, *i. e.* a place of learning : and it would do you good to see the numbers of hopeful young gentlemen who come from all parts of *England* in pursuit of learning, insomuch that all the colleges are frequently crowded. But you will say, What do they learn? To which I answer in the negative, as being much easier than the affirmative. For it appears from our text, that there are some things which they do not learn.

(1.) Praying:—I mean, they do not, in common, learn to pray to God. It seems this is no part of the approved exercises of the students in that university ; for, says our text, *Six young gentlemen were expelled the University for praying.* From whence we may draw this inference, namely, That if the Vice Chancellor, and the Heads of Houses, expelled these six offenders for praying to God, it is natural to suppose, that they are not guilty of that crime themselves ; otherwise, they would fall under that reproof. *Rom. ii. 1.*

(2.) To read and expound the scriptures is another thing which seems to be there prohibited. Whether *Rochester's Poems*, *Tristram Shandy*, *The Minor*, and such books, are esteemed orthodox, and therefore tolerated, I pretend not to say ; but one thing is clear from our text, that reading and expounding the scriptures is against the
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the Oxonian law ; for *Six young gentlemen were expelled the University for reading and expounding the scriptures.*

(3.) Singing of hymns is another thing which they do not learn : this is also clear from the words. By singing of hymns, I mean praising of God for blessings received, according to Col. iii. 16. *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.* But singing of psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, cannot be connived at in the University by the Heads of Houses ; for *six young men were expelled the University for singing of hymns.*

Note. This was an extract of a *Letter* from Oxford ; which shews, that there be some people there who *can* write, notwithstanding all the reflections that have been cast upon them ; and that, although reading is dangerous there, yet an Oxonian may write with impunity.

II. *Last Friday* :—the better day, the better deed. *Friday*, you know, is a fast day ; on which it was fittest to go about a work of this importance, when the judgment was not fettered with bodily grossness, but purged by an empty belly.

Last Friday :—It was not a thing that happened in the dark ages of *Monkish Ignorance*, but what has happened in this *enlightened age of CHRISTIANITY*. It was not when the University was tied hand and foot by *Popish* prejudices, and the Heads of Houses were obliged to submit to their betters ; but it was *Last Friday*, the act and deed of *Protestant Divines*.

III. *Six Students* !—What a Miracle was it,
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my beloved, that, out of so many hundreds of students as are at *Oxford*, only Six should be found guilty of praying, reading, and expounding the scriptures. This shews the faithfulness of their vigilant tutors, in guarding them against such pernicious practices. Now, from this, observe,

1. That there were but Six Students of all the University, who could be detected in those evils of praying, &c. much to the honour of that learned body.

2. That those Six being expelled;—now there are none left in all the colleges who take upon them to pray, read, and expound the scriptures:—therefore, gentlemen may with safety send their sons to that fountain of learning, without fearing that they will become religious;—there being none left *now* to ensnare them.

IV. They all belonged to *Edmund-Hall*.—It seems they loved to be together; from whence it may be gathered that they loved one another. A fault which the Heathens accused the Christians of old with, but from which mankind in general are now pretty free. It appears as if this *Edmund-Hall* was the only place at *Oxford* in which praying people were to be found. But it is hoped that the governors at that Hall will be mulct for their carelessness in suffering the students to read the bible and to enquire after religion, seeing it is contrary to the sense of this university.

V. *Were expelled the University*. Deprived of the rights and privileges of the king's loving subjects, or as the word signifies, they were drove out, forced away, and banished from the University. This religious act was performed
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by the Vice Chancellor, after an hearing of several hours. I remember when bishop *Hooper* was sent for by queen *Mary*, the pious bishop of *London* and my *Lord Chancellor*, the guides of her conscience, being determined to have him burnt, they thought to make a shew of justice by giving him a hearing, withal resolving not to swerve from their bloody design. So, in like manner, our venerable tutors were determined not to suffer *praying persons* to breathe the University air ; yet being tied to form, they would give them an hearing.

An hearing of several hours,—Ah ! my beloved, ye may see how remarkably the scriptures are fulfilled in that learned body of divines, where it says, Hear ye indeed, but understand not ; see ye indeed, but perceive not.

VI. We come to the crime for which they were expelled the University ; and I wot it was an heinous crime indeed. This would appear without illustrating it, from the character of the expellers, namely, Mr. Vice Chancellor, and the Heads of Houses. But as I love to remove every hillock out of the way for your better information, I shall explain it. What was their crime then, my beloved, think you? Was it drinking? No, no, it was not drinking ; *for they were very temperate.* Was it whoring then, the common practice of many students? No, it was not whoring neither ; for their lives are said to have been *very exemplary.* I wish, my beloved, it had been no worse. But what was it then? Was it swearing and fighting, and abusing their fellow students? No, for they shunned the other students, as a wise man will

shun

shun an attorney: thus much may be gathered from our text, which intimates that they met together among themselves. But it was praying:—that, my beloved, was one part of their crime. Six young men were expelled the University for praying. For Mr. V—e C——r and the Heads of Houses will suffer no praying people to continue in the University.

Reading and expounding the scriptures was another part of the crime, but what, in the name of the Pope, can students have to do with the scriptures? What a pity is it that the bible is not locked up in the Vatican? But letting that pass, we find that learning to expound the scriptures is no part of the employment of the students, *Six young men being expelled the University for reading and expounding the scriptures.*

What added to their guilt, was that they carried their religion to a *private house*. But what can *private* people have to do with religion? Ought not they to do as their forefathers did, namely, give up their consciences and understandings to the guidance of their venerable priest? Is it not enough that gentlemen in black know, and understand religion, but every private person must be dabbling in it, contrary to the sense of this University? I wot, my beloved, that the clergy cannot thrive as they do, if every private house must become a worshipping temple; but it is thought there is little reason to fear this, seeing our text informs us, that the doctors of the university are determined to do what they can to prevent it; for *Six young men were expelled the University for being religious in a private house.*

VII. Another part of their crime was, that they *beld Methodistical tenets*. This same methodist, my beloved, is a cramp word, gathered out of old books, by men of reverence and learning, and applied to such who pray, read, expound the scripture, and sing hymns in private houses, a people never to be tolerated by the clergy. You'll observe, that this same hard word, which the nation has long rung with, first of all was given to the sons of Esculapius, as a name of honour, and about thirty years ago, was by learned men raised up, as the witch of Endor (who seems to have been a clergywoman too) raised the ghost of old Samuel.

Those same sons of Esculapius were physicians, surgeons, and apothecaries in their day; but then they were quite immethodical, like the greater part of the old women in black prunella and white cambrick. For instance, they had not the method of wearing large wigs, gold headed canes, and of wheeling about the streets in their chariots. And with respect to their physic and surgery, they were guided chiefly by the dictates of nature, without the abstruse methods of art. At last there arose a great man, and his name was *Galen*, a mighty man for dissecting of apes; for it ought to be observed, that in his days, in Pagan lands, there were very few criminals who deserved death, and fewer still who were given to the surgeons. Well, what should he do, think you? why, my beloved, being blest with better stars at his nativity than his predecessors, he took their confused and immethodical practices, and reduced them into method, *i. e.* form and order. Well, this great man being principal

pal of the College of Physicians, he taught his pupils to observe orderly rules, otherwise *method*, from whence his disciples were in honour called Methodists. So much for learning: now for doctrine.

Then, my beloved, the case stands thus: Amongst the clergy there always have been a great number who did not love praying, singing of hymns, reading and expounding the scriptures; the like may be said of the students. What they aimed at was a good living without much work; and as one in a certain place says, *Those men care not if the Devil take the flock, provided they have but the fleece.* On the other hand, there have been some who loved to pray, to sing hymns, to read and expound the scriptures; who, if they were not permitted to do it in public houses, or churches, would do it in private houses, to the no small disgrace of the other gentlemen. Well, my beloved, these are they who have been called Methodists, fanaticks and enthusiasts. Now a word or two about their tenets, and then I dismiss this head; for really their tenets, being destructive of priestcraft, must by no means be encouraged.

1. First, and foremost, they think that a man ought to attest no article of faith, but what he believes to be true.

2. They think that a man ought not to profess to my lord-bishop, that he believes all the thirty-nine articles of the established church to be the true faith of the gospel, when he secretly believes in his heart that they are false and methodistical.

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3. They think that a man should not profess to his lordship, that he is moved by the Holy Ghost to desire the office of a deacon, when he is in fact moved with the hopes of a benefice, and considers it in his heart as delusion and enthusiasm, for any man to pretend to be moved by the Holy Ghost in these days.

4. They think that after a man has subscribed the thirty-nine articles, and solemnly swore that he believes them, that he should not go and preach doctrines directly opposite to the said articles.

5. They think that no man ought to be permitted to enter the pulpit, whose life and conversation is *dissolute*.

These, with a great many tenets besides, equally ridiculous to maintain, and therefore, though tolerated by the king and parliament, the Heads of Houses will never endure them in the University.

VIII. *The — of the — defended their doctrines by the thirty-nine articles of the established church.*

I wot, I fear me much that this doctor is himself tinctured with methodistical tenets ; for no body, now-a-days, besides methodists, &c. considers the thirty-nine articles of the established church as any test of doctrine : as for the clergy, it is well known that they are mostly *dissenters* from the doctrine of the articles and prayer book. Ah ! beloved, if the truth was known, it would be found that this same Doctor *Dixon* prays to God, and reads his bible ; or how else should he take part with those young men whom the Heads of Houses expelled the
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University, for praying, reading, and expounding the scriptures? Besides, he would not have spoken so highly of their piety and the exemplariness of their lives, as the text tells us he did, seeing the sense of the University was, that their praying, reading, &c. was vicious. I fear me, my beloved, that if the Heads of Houses do not keep a good *look out* after this same doctor, it will be difficult for them to keep the University clear from such as pray, and read, and expound the scripture; but *his motion was over-ruled*. What is one methodist amongst a hoit of divines?

IX. Dr. —, one of the Heads of Houses present, observed, that as these Six gentlemen were expelled for having too much religion, it would be very proper to enquire into the conduct of some who had too little. From this part of our text it appears, that the several crimes alledged against them, amounted in the aggregate to a being *righteous over-much*; which the learned Dr. Trap, of crabbed memory, has very piously shewn to be an evil, almost unpardonable. According to the Rev. Doctor Nowel's learned answer to that prophane son of our Alma Mater, called *Pietas Oxoniensis*, it is evidently much more safe, and less impious, to ridicule the miracles of Moses, and of Christ, than to pray in private houses without book. The eloquent Orator of the University gives a full account of the case of Mr. W——ng, a friend of his Oratorship's, who was charged upon oath with the above said contempt of the scriptures, and ridicule of the miracles of Moses and Christ. The proofs were so point blank against the said Rev. Mr. W——ng, that his reverence could not deny the charge.

Well then, what was the issue? Was he expelled? No, my beloved, he was not expelled. Quere, Why was he not expelled? Ans. His reverence pleaded his being *drunk* when he uttered those contemptful words against the miracles of Moses and of Christ, *i. e.* *The CANDIDATE for holy orders WAS DRUNK when he ridiculed revealed religion*; and yet he got into orders; and yet he continues a member of the University. There is a vulgar proverb indeed, which says, "What a man thinks when he is sober, he speaks out when he is drunk." Whether this is applicable to parson W——ng, I pretend not to say; but this we are certain of, Had the Six Methodists ventured to pray to God when they were drunk, they had been expelled for it when they were sober.

But the *sweet-spirited* V——e C——r, received Mr. W——ng's penance favourably; and good reason why, for he was never charged by any body with the heinous crime of praying to God off book in private houses; or that would have ruffled the V——e C——r's spirit to the ejection of parson W——ll——ng.

In the same affair, related by the Rev. D. Nowell, it is plain that private religious assemblies, alias conventicles, are in much less esteem at Oxford than tap-houses and taverns; for the six methodists were expelled for praying in a conventicle, but the Rev. Mr. W——ng *could get drunk in a tap-house*, and yet continue a member of the university. Nor can this be denied, unless the public orator should eat his words; otherwise shew from good and authentic records that members of that learned body do occasionally get drunk within their own peculiar districts.

But

But let us pass on to the absurdity of this doctor's proposals "*to enquire into the conduct of those who had too little religion:*" As if that could be deemed a crime! Would this doctor have the colleges to stand empty, think you? But we learn that this motion was over-ruled, the V—e C——r and Heads of Houses did not think proper to come into it; from which after ages will have a very respectable idea of the present piety of that learned body.

Thus, my beloved, I have gone through the first part of my plan, and shall proceed to the second.

II. Namely, to raise a notable point of doctrine from it; which is this, viz. That the conduct of the Heads of the Houses in expelling the fix young men for praying, reading, and expounding the scriptures, is defensible, from the conduct of the clergy of all ages and countries, whatsoever snarling persons may say.

To clear this I shall produce four instances; most of which I shall take out of that old antiquated book called the scripture. A book which sets forth the true spirit of the University doctors to the very life. The

1st. Of these instances we have in the book of Daniel, chap. iii. wherein some transactions of the Doctors of the established church at Babylon are recorded; concerning which I would make the following notes.

I. That the religion, by law established, was the religion of the golden image which Nebuchadnezzar, at the request of the clergy, made and set up in the plains of Dura. A place, my beloved, which, if we may give credit to travellers, very much resemble the plains of Oxford.

II. The clergy, who you know have always been wonderfully fond of a *golden god*, would by no means suffer an act of toleration to be passed in favour of methodists and dissenters: but, on the contrary, got an act of parliament on their own side, enjoining the strictest uniformity in religion, and threatening death to all dissenters: It seems this prince was too easy; and like some of our former princes in England, was so much afraid of the clergy, that he was obliged to conform, and to espoused an act of uniformity which the clergy hoped would bring good grist to their mill, verse 6.

III. This law established, the clergy were very impatient to have the subjects of this great king brought to the test; which they thought best to do by appointing a public feast, on which it was required that every man and mother's son should fall down before, and worship this golden god set up by the king, as the tool of the parsons.

IV. That there were four degrees of learned men, whom I suppose, dwelt in the university at Babylon. First there were *magicians*, with them, the same as doctors of divinity are with us in our Universities: secondly, there were *astrologers*, or men of learned sciences, much the same with our masters of arts: thirdly, there were *sorcerers*, who, I suppose, were either fellows of the college, or bachelors of arts, appointed to be tythe-gatherers: and, fourthly, there were Chaldeans or students of their divinity, and other fine arts: and,

V. That all those gentry were very vigilant in discovering and informing against dissenters, verse 8. *Wherefore at that time certain Chaldeans*
came

tame near and accused the Jews. That is to say, certain young students, being spurred on to it by their tutors who cared not to appear in such a dirty affair themselves, and so forth; by which they appear to have been rather more honourable, than the reverend tutor of *E—d Hall*.

VI. Strict as the law was, there were some who took upon them to pray to God, like those six young gentlemen who were expelled the university for praying. But what were they, think you; why truly, they were dissenters and methodists, for they would not conform to the Babylonish prayer book, and other forms of worship by law established, therefore were dissenters; and they were methodists, if praying to God, and refusing to pin his faith on the sleeve of the parson's gown, denominates a man a methodist. But what followed, trow, ye? why as soon as they were found out to be non-conformists, the clergy accused them of rebellion; and had the king been as fond of burning dissenters, as their reverences were, these men had in a trice been executed, without having another chance for their lives. But he was not quite so fiery, but gave them another trial, and strove to bring them over to the church by gentleness, intermixed with severity. The gentleness was his, and the severity belonged to their reverences. But the methodists continued obstinate, and at last overcame the parsons. If you'll read the chapter through, you'll see the upshot of it, and how the doctors of the university were confounded, and the dissenters re-admitted to the king's favour; for God did work for them.

I pass

I pass on to the days of *Darius*; a prince who had a praying nobleman for his first minister of state, and, for ought I know to the contrary, he might be first lord of the treasury, as well as chancellor of the empire. His name was Daniel, and by birth a Jew. Well, my beloved, being so very great, he was grievously envied by the inferior place-men; though they kept it secret, and spoke him fair to his face; and he was very much abused by those who were out of place. If we may judge of ancient things from what appears in ages more modern; we may suppose that the times took a turn something like the following:

One man cries out against his being a favourite, and too intimate with the queen or queen's mother, as their kinsmen do upon similar occasions; another complains of his being a foreigner, and a captive, so highly dignified, whilst the natives were neglected: perhaps their news-papers might be stuffed with clamours against the exotic favourite; and the incensed mob might be taught to cry out, liberty and Babylon for ever — but no Jew — no favourite — no captive. Well, my beloved, all the *inns* and *outs* might have fretted themselves to death, without being able to do any thing against this prime minister, this same Daniel, the king's favourite, if they had not applied to the principal clergy; the Heads of Houses. But I trow, the reverend doctors, the magicians, the masters of the art of astrology, &c. &c. no sooner embarked in the popular cause, but they were more than a match for the favourite, who had fallen by means of their reverences, if the
Almighty

Almighty had had as little to do with him as he has to do with the greatest part of the clergy.

Well, my beloved, the Heads of Houses and the disaffected statesmen met altogether, and consulted which was the best way to overturn the state of this praying favourite. But the conduct of Daniel was so exemplary, that they knew they should be able to find nothing wrong in him unless they could entrap him in matters of religion. Therefore having first persuaded the king, that *the church was in danger*, they urged the necessity of a law being made, prohibiting any man's praying to God. Well, *Darius* the king was not such a novice in politics, but he knew the necessity of having the clergy on his side, and therefore, tho' he could not see into that part of their mysterious divinity, made the decree according to the plan concerted by that learned body.

But it is thought that he would have strained a point with them, if he had known that they were aiming at the life of his faithful favourite.

But how stiff these biblists are! for this Daniel went on praying to God, reading and expounding the scriptures *in a private house*, notwithstanding the king had under the direction of the clergy ordained otherwise; this was enough to have provoked the *Heads of Houses to have expelled him* *the University* had he belonged to it, but he not belonging to it, they were obliged to be satisfied with putting him to death without expelling him.

Now, lest any should object to the clergy having the honour of devising this scheme, because there is no notice taken of them in the history, let it be observed, that it was never known that many great men or noblemen were
ever

ever given to interfere in religious matters, statesmen in all ages have been wise enough to take up with the religion which the priests have prescribed to them: therefore what you give of honour to any body in this affair, let it be given to the clergy. And I pass on to make a comparison betwixt that affair and this before us.

I. They could find no occasion of fault in Daniel; so it was with the six young men who were expelled the University, for their lives were said to be *pious and exemplary*.

II. They thought they might entrap him in some matters concerning the law of his God. So likewise these young men, though they were no whoremasters, no gamblers, no drunkards, no scripture revilers, &c. yet they could be trapped in matters relating to their God.

III. This same Daniel, notwithstanding the penalty denounced in the edict against any who should take upon them to pray to God, perversely, rebelliously, and obstinately persisted in his usual apostolical, puritanical nonconformistical, and methodistical manner of praying to God in a private house. So no doubt but these six young men knew that it was against the will of the Heads of Houses, &c. that any of the students under their care should pray to God in a private house; or even pray without book in a public house; for, says our text, *Six young men were expelled the University for praying, reading, and expounding the scriptures in a private house*; yet they persisted in it.

Lastly, under this head. Daniel, president of the princes, kneeled upon his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God as aforetime. But how will you be able

ble to find such puritanic conduct among our British noblemen? for I wot that a praying nobleman is pretty near as great a rarity as a white crow upon Malvern hills. If outward conduct is to determine inward sentiments; it may be concluded, that most of our people of fashion consider themselves either as immortal, or as on a level with the beasts destitute of rational souls.

The 2d. Instance of clerical conduct which gives countenance to the late act of the Heads of Houses, I shall bring from the clergy of that famous university at Jerusalem, in the days of Christ and his apostles. In the established church of Judea there were articles of faith and a canon law, which all the clergy professed to believe, regard, and defend. This confession of faith was first compiled by Moses, the founder of that church, and afterwards ratified and confirmed by Ezra and Nehemiah, their two principal reformers; even as the thirty-nine articles of the established church were ratified and confirmed by our English reformers. I know you'll be ready to think that the clergy deemed it an honour to tread in the steps of those pious reformers; but I trow, my beloved, ye are greatly mistaken; for the *Heads of Houses* of the university at Jerusalem even did as many others have done since, make the commandment void to establish their own traditions. Perhaps you will be ready to startle like the cows in July, when bit by the envious flies, when ye hear of a university at Jerusalem; but I assure you, it was there that the doctors (*i. e.* teachers) of the law dwelt, and their law was their divinity. Now, where do the neighbouring dogs delight to resort so much as to a place where the carcase

is ? or where shall we see such swarms of reverend doctors as at the university ? Those pharisees, those lawyers, those scribes, and those doctors were all gownsmen ; but whether they wore the very same uniforms with the gentlemen of Oxford university, my author does not say. Yet this much may be gathered from the history, that if that wandering Jew, who they say has lived ever since the times I am speaking of, should chance in his travels to call at Oxford, he would think upon his longevity, from the manners of the men that it was old Jerusalem risen again from its ruins and that the ancient scribes and pharisees, &c. were all risen from the dead. But we will drop this, and come to the matter in hand, which is, to give a just account of those clergy, that you may see that the Heads of Houses have not departed a jot from the rules of their clerical ancestors.

The Jerusalem clergy finding that their living depended upon subscribing the articles given by Moses, and the homilies compiled by the prophets, they could, for the sake of a venerable reputation, and a fattish living, or, as ye would say, *for the good of the church*, very readily subscribe and attest them upon oath, notwithstanding many of them, called sadduces, did not believe any thing about them. Now, not to take any notice of the vulgar opinion, namely, that there are a great many sadduces in our universities, I cannot but observe the weakness of those who blame such of the clergy who swear to articles they do not believe, seeing that was practised by the clergy of the first established church that was in the world.

About something more than 1700 years since,
there

there arose some dissenters, who made a great stir among the people, and brought great uneasiness upon the clergy. I do not mean that those were dissenters from the articles of faith which was of old given to the saints; but they were dissenters from the clergy, and did not spare to detect their errors, both in principles and practice: a practice which our modern methodists are said to be guilty of, to the great concern of the Heads of Houses.

Those were laymen, not regularly educated at the university, and who took upon them to preach without receiving authority from the archbishop of Jerusalem; I think his name was Caiphas, and I wot he was primate of all Judea. Well, those men were not only laymen, but even the riff-raff of them, even fishermen: note, they were not attorneys or merchants clerks; nor were they chymists, nor apothecaries, but fishermen. And yet they prayed extempore, and yet they preached, and yet they expounded the scriptures to the great confusion of the holy trade of priestcraft. The established church was now thought to be in danger. And how it could be thought so was something strange, seeing those praying and preaching dissenters proved all their doctrine from the articles and homilies given by Moses and the prophets, even as our modern methodists prove their doctrines from the articles and homilies of the church of England; and the church of England has been thought in no small danger from these same methodists, upon grounds equally substantial. Believe me, my beloved, the learned, the zealous doctor Sacheverel was not the first, nor the last, who was grieved for fear of the church. But he is dead
and

and gone, therefore I return to the clergy at Jerusalem; and ye cannot but remember how active they were in procuring the destruction of Jesus Christ, and, when he was risen from the dead and ascended into glory, they abated nothing of their zeal for their established church.

For no sooner were they aware of the power of the apostles doctrine (by apostles I mean those who took upon them to pray, read, and expound the scriptures in private houses, as you may see in the subsequent part of the history) as these six young men who were expelled the university are said to have done. Seeing, I say, their extraordinary fervour in preaching, they cried out against them as persons drunk with new wine, by which we may understand *enthusiasm*. Acts ii. 13. Well, my beloved, this is the very cry of the clergy against all such as preach Jesus and the resurrection, and from their mouths the vulgar catch the sound; so that with many, a methodist, and an enthusiast; a dissenter, and a fanatic, are thought to be synonymous terms. From hence we may learn, that slander may as well be thrown out in a sermon as in a farce, and will issue with as good a grace from a pulpit as from a theatre. But no more of this, because our time draws towards the other end.

It is very remarkable how zealous those gentlemen of the gown, who aimed no higher than a good fat benefice, have always shewed themselves when the doctrine of Christ in its simplicity hath been preached; for why? truly because it lays the axe to the root of the tree of priestcraft, and throws down the importance of the parson into the dirt. If the clergy were all to observe the rules given by Christ to his disciples

ciples in his sermon upon the mount, where would be all their titles, their riches and grandeur, their coaches, their livery-men, and their plate? But ye know that these rules are different from this craft, whereby the parsons get their wealth, as heaven is different from hell. But as priest-craft is lucrative, it will be sure to find supporters, whilst the houses have got one HEAD left upon them.

In Acts v. we find that Peter and the rest of his praying, reading, and scripture-expounding brethren, were brought before the Vice Chancellor and the Heads of Houses for a hearing, and after a hearing of several hours they took council to slay them, v. 33. But there was one Dr. Gamaliel, the head of a certain house, who sided with them, and probably proved their doctrine from the articles of the Jewish church as by law established. I trow this same Doctor Gamaliel was tinctured with the doctrine they preached, as the principal of *Edmund-Hall* who defended the faith of the six young men who were expelled the university of Oxford for praying, &c. may be supposed secretly to have believed in the articles which he once subscribed, though he dare not now to avow his faith openly.

There is one thing in the account that is something remarkable, namely, the wise motion of Dr. Gamaliel over-ruled the bloody designs of the priests; but it was not so at the other university, for although the principal of *Edmund-Hall* defended and proved the methodistical doctrine from the articles of the church, and spoke highly of the piety and exemplariness of the lives of the young men, his motion was over-ruled

ruled, and the six young men were expelled, as before observed, What is one methodist among a host of divines?

Another thing we may take notice of, namely, those ancient doctors had a law by which they could put people to death for praying, reading, and expounding the scriptures; but our universities have no such law, or it is no way doubtful but that the same zeal which will, under a protestant government, expel the students of the university for praying, &c. would, for the same reasons, burn offenders at a stake, were they favoured with a popish king. So that if the Heads of Houses were less bloody in their designs than their ancestors, it is not to be imputed to want of good will, but to the protestant restraints which they are under.

Remarkable was the procedure of the Jews against Stephen, related Acts vi. 9. *Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, &c. disputing with Stephen, &c.* This same Stephen was a low churchman, a whig, and a puritan, and therefore was sure to be opposed in that blinded age. But who were they, my beloved, that here are said to have risen against Stephen?—Not bargemen, link-boys, lamplighters and Irish chairmen; but gentlemen of the synagogue. *Certain of the synagogue, i. e.* Devout men of the established church; their Lauds, their Calamys, and their Sacheverels. But to what synagogue did they belong, think you? Why, they belonged to the *synagogue of the libertines*. Was ever one egg more like to another, than ancient things are to modern? If the gentlemen of the synagogue of the Libertines would have been quiet, Stephen might

might have gone on preaching and praying without opposition; but then it would have spoiled the priests trade of getting wealth.

This leads me to enquire wherefore they rose up against him. Was he a drunkard, a murderer, or seditious person? or did he speak reproachfully of the miracles of Christ and of Moses? No, none of all these were alledged against him. But the grand cause of their umbrage was, "The word of God encreased, and the number of the disciples multiplied," whereby people forsook their old Libertine pastors, insomuch that the parish synagogues, in many places, were almost wholly forsaken. Exactly alike again: Stephen, you must know, was a great ringleader of that sect that turned the world upside down; *he was full of faith and power, performing many notable miracles*, to the great grief of the gentlemen belonging to the synagogue of the Libertines; therefore they thought it best to dispatch him out of the way, for the safety of the church.

It would be endless, my beloved, to point out all the instances in which the Jewish and the — clergy agree: I shall therefore leave them to another occasion, and shall pass on to another very famous church in that part of the world, and after that I shall come nearer home, within our own ken, . And,

III. This famous church was that of Diana at Ephesus; and I wot, in this church there was many a good living in the gift of the university; and I trow, that the Heads of Houses were very careful that none should enjoy one of them unless he was well known to be a true son of the church that is to say, a promoter of the sale of the shrines
of

of Diana, and a worshipper of the image that fell down from Jupiter.

This Diana was, in her day, a lady remarkable for hunting of stags, and ever since, her clergy have been as remarkable for the hunting of (not stags, but) a good benefice. Now, my beloved, this same huntress was the personage worshipped by most people of Asia, and she had many, very many clergy, who adored her for the sake of gain; *for by this craft we have our wealth*, said they. A language not yet practically laid aside

There was a famous university for the training up of young gentlemen in the holy craft of making shrines for the goddess; and a lucrative craft they found it, my beloved, for they had it in their power to sell a brazen shrine for a golden price; a thing which others besides them practise.

This university was at Ephesus, a very populous city, where water was cheap, but fire very dear; and here were many colleges and halls for the training up of young men in the craft of *getting wealth*. Every hall had a Head, and over all the Heads of Houses was a Vice Chancellor, the Rev. Dr. Demetrius by name. As for praying, reading, and expounding the scriptures, they meddled not with them, but were, in the highest degree, intent upon getting wealth.

Well, they carried on this craft for many years, till at last there came some itinerate preachers to town, who made it their business to pray to God, to read and expound the scriptures, and sing hymns in private houses, contrary to the sense of the university of Ephesus. This was no small mortification to the clergy, who very well knew
that

that if real religion, or praying, reading, and expounding the scriptures were tolerated that it would put an end to their lucrative priestcraft, and their reverences would fall into disgrace. But to prevent such a catastrophe, the Rev. Dr. Demetrius Vice Chancellor, assembled the Heads of Houses to consult what was best to be done, and it was resolved, *nemine contradicente*, to cry out, *the church was in danger*, that under pretence of saving the church, they might save their own profits. Well, they cried out, that *the church was in danger*, that *the church was in danger*, till they had sufficiently enflamed the rabble, who have always proved the pillars of the church, when instigated by the PRIESTS: then they laid hold on the itinerants, and had them before the Heads of Houses, who gave them such treatment as praying people may expect to meet with from the clergy of the ——. It happened however, as in a late case, that there was one man of integrity and honour amongst them, much like the Head of Edmund-Hall, only with this difference, the one was an Attorney, and the other is a gentleman in holy orders. Well, this attorney, it seems, being town-clerk of Ephesus, thought that the clergy carried their authority a little beyond the rules of moderation and decency, a thing by no means uncommon for some gentlemen of the cap and gown. This town-clerk took up the cause of the itinerants; and, in a spirited, sensible manner, defended their conduct and tenets; not from the thirty-nine articles, but from the articles of natural religion and morality, and spake very highly of their piety and good behaviour. I cannot but remark, that in this affair the town-clerk was more successful than the gentleman who pleaded

the cause of the six methodists at Oxford: the former over-ruled the purposes of Diana's clergy, but the University clergy overruled the motion of the latter, according to our text; for, though he defended their doctrine from the thirty-nine articles of the established church, and spoke very highly of the piety and the exemplariness of their lives, *These six young men were expelled the university for praying, reading, and expounding the scriptures, and for singing hymns in a private house.* For why? Why, truly, my beloved, because praying, reading, and expounding the scriptures, is not the craft by which we get our wealth. For proof of this proposition. I refer you to stubborn facts, namely, that you shall seldom see a divine, who makes a point of praying, reading, and expounding the scriptures, and of singing hymns either in private or public houses, who keeps his equipage, and possesseth your fat, fat livings. I wot, my beloved, that one drone eats more honey than four laborious bees; for proof of this, I refer you to the reverend Dr. Pliny, an author of approved merit and a great divine.

But I pass on to the fourth established church, the clergy of which, in all respects, possessed the spirit of University divines, or Heads of Houses; and I trow, it is a church of great pretensions, the clergy of which are as infallible as the most holy mother Pope Joan, that lady who was Christ's vicar, Peter's successor, and carried the keys of heaven, hell and purgatory, in her pocket, when she was in her prime, and her moon shone at full. I guess, by this time, you know that I mean the good old, one, catholic, roman, infallible, pontifical, universal, mother

ther church, in the bosom of which our forefathers of the surcingle slept so snug, wrapt about with abbey lands, as with warm blankets. And if I may speak the sentiments of my sable brethren of the University, we wish, for the sake of those lands, that we were all safe rolling in her warm bosom once more. But I will not keep you in suspense about this.

IV. Church, the conduct of whose clergy was so near a kin to the conduct of the clergy of ——. In the days of Betsey, the vestal queen, the clergy suffered great discontent. For why? Because praying, reading, and scripture expounding people were suffered to live, and were even tolerated in the University, which was a kind of counterbalance to the emolument their reverences had enjoyed in the days of Mary, of scarlet memory; for as soon as this orthodox lady had ascended the throne, matters took a very agreeable turn, and the right reverend bishops, Bonner and Gardiner, began to work for the good of the church. Like true-bred Doctors, they searched every corner of the land for matter to work upon; and who should they pitch upon, trow ye, but those ministers and others who prayed to God, read and expounded the scriptures, and sung hymns? For those clergymen were much like unto others; they discouraged praying to any besides saints canonized in their own church; and as for the scriptures, they found it for their interest that the sense of them should be concealed. And no doubt other people of the same practices have reasons equally ponderous to assign for their conduct.

Who was Cranmer, my beloved? Why

truly, though he was primate of all England, he took upon him to pray, read, and expound the scriptures, and as one such, according to the laws of Trent council, he was expelled the convocation, and burnt to death as an enemy to the clergy. Latimer, and Ridley, and Hooper, and Taylor, and Bradford, and Hunter, and Philpot, &c. &c. &c. were all of them guilty of those heinous offences of praying, of reading, of expounding the scriptures, and of singing of hymns. The same crimes with which the Oxford methodists were charged, and for which they were expelled the University.

Thus, beloved, I have with much pleasure gone so far through with my first proposed plan, and from what I have advanced we may raise the following remarks.

1. That the spirit of our Doctors has been the same in all ages, a noble spirit of opposition to methodistical tenets. The magicians, the astrologers, the scorcerers, and the Chaldeans, the scribes, the pharisees, the lawyers, the sadducees, and the doctors, and the shrine-makers, and the inquisitors, and the roman bishops, and the vice chancellors, and the Heads of Houses, are all of the same religion; namely, *to oppose praying, reading, and expounding of the scriptures.*

2. That the state of religion in our land is likely to be soon upon a very respectable footing, seeing no more than six, out of the vast number of students at Oxford, took upon them to pray to God, to read and to expound the scriptures; so that it is hoped, the many parishes in England will be likely to have parsons who will let their parishioners have their own way, and go quietly to hell without disturbing of them.

Whereas

Whereas, was not care taken to suppress praying people in the University, we should have the nation swarming with them, much to the detriment of priestcraft.

3. It is observable that we have found out more fully what four of those six gentlemen were, ere they set foot in the University; one was a publican, another a smith, a third a barber, and a fourth a teacher under W—y, as it is written by the Rev. Dr. Oxoniensis, Gazetteer, No. 12199, April 8, 1768; and I wot, my beloved, though my kindred are professors of such arts, they are to be held as dangerous, therefore must not be tolerated by the clergy.

First, and foremost, The clergy have suffered much discontent from the blacksmith; and, whilst the bitterness of the loss of the abbey lands belcheth from our stomachs, we prunella gentlemen will never forgive the blacksmiths. Quere, For why? Answ. Because he was a blacksmith's son, lord Thomas Cromwell by name, who stripped the church, that is to say, the clergy, of those warm, those fat abbey lands. No more blacksmiths, I pray ye now—we'll have none of them. Therefore Mr. V—C——r did well in expelling the man, because he had been a blacksmith.

2. Another of them had been a publican, *i. e.* a tax-gatherer; and, I suppose, Mr. V—C——r thought the difference betwixt *tax gathering* and *tythe-gathering* being so very trifling, that after a young man had sufficiently learned at home to gather taxes, it was quite needless for him to come to the University to learn to *gather tythes*. I wot, my beloved, that the old grudge betwixt the pharisees and the publicans has not yet sub-
ficed,

fided, for as the learned *Oxonienfis* observes, the V—C——r expelled a man the University for having been a publican.

3. And in the next place, another had been a *barber*; that is to say a *shaver*. His reverence doctor Nowel, public orator of the University, hath given it as his charitable opinion, that this same barber can make a *very good wig*, from whence he lovingly concludes, that the said barber need not to starve; and from whence I conclude, that he would have made a very useful member of the University. *A good wig*, says Dr. *Nowel*, i. e. a decent artificial covering, for a bald pate, wherefore it appears to have been very bad policy to expel so useful a man, at a time when the Heads of Houses are so bald and weather-beaten themselves.

4. A fourth was a teacher in a school, under W——y. But who or what this same W——y is, whether an hill, an old abbey, an holy college, or an oak tree, the accurate *Oxonienfis* does not say. But this schoolmaster who taught under it, be it what it will, was justly expelled. For why? Because he departed so very far from the rule established among students. The common rule observed by the hopeful young gentlemen of the gown is, before they have so much as learned the first lesson of themselves they conclude that they are able to teach others; witness so many dull parsons. But this man, though he had been accustomed to teach others, meanly debased himself so far as to receive instructions from others; but such a mean opinion of one's self being no way likely to add weight to the importance of the parson, must not be tolerated.

H Y M N

H Y M N

In Praise of the

U N I V E R S I T Y.

I.

*MY thanks, and the nation's, to the Doctors be
given,
Those Guardians of Virtue, those Porters of
Heaven,
For their timely wise care in suppressing the growth
Of praying, expounding, and hymn-singing youth.*

II.

*Should praying be suffer'd by our learned Sages
(What has not been known in Ox——d for ages)
Instead of gay parsons, with cassock and band,
There would be none but Puritans all o'er the
land.*

III.

*Expounding the scriptures! this still is more
wicked,
Therefore from college be they instant kicked;
For scripture and priestcraft as distant do dwell,
As some PARSONS from Virtue, or HEAVEN from
HELL.*

IV.

*We'll swear to the rubrick, by this is our living;
(Some hundreds a twelvemonth is sure worth the
having)
But we'll cast off our oaths as soon as they're
swallow'd
For Perjury in gownsmen hath long since been
hallow'd.*

V.

*Should we suffer the doctrines to which we of yore
Gave assent and consent, and solemnly swore
To preach, and defend them against opposition,
We should throw ourselves wide from holy pro-
motion.*

VI.

*These youth with their strictness detect our loose
living,
Which, known to the world, would keep us from
thriving:
Religion's a mirror that shews all profaneness,
Exclude it we therefore to hide our own vainness.*

VII.

*If drinking, or whoring, or scripture reviling,
Had been represented as their daily failing,
(As often in others it certainly might)
To wink at their foibles would then have been
right.*

VIII.

*Thus acting with candour and tender forbearance,
Till we had reclaim'd them by patient endurance ;
But praying and reading, those horrible evils,
Oblige us at once to devote them to DEVILS.*

* The method pursued by the Heads of Houses, for reclaiming Mr. Welling from his infidelity and drunkenness; according to the Rev. Dr. Nowel, and the Goliath Slayer,

F I N I S.

9 FE63